

South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee
Meeting Conducted Virtually
May 15, 2023

Committee Members: Bob Fisher, Gary Lessing, Brian Moroz, Pete Trelenberg, Chris Vanuga, Dave Wilson
Absent: Derek Abbott
Town Council Liaison: Tim Shaw

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am.
2. Minutes from the April 17, 2023, meeting were approved.
3. Town Council Update (Tim)
 - a. Committee who would like to continue to be on this committee for the next fiscal year need to fill out form on the town website by this Friday, May 19th.
 - b. Council meeting next week. Updated them. Harvester coming next week for up to two weeks. We are also talking to DNREC about having them come in too. No real change in their status as far as ability to harvest algae.
 - c. Council will discuss how to maintain the canals for the long term.
 - d. Floating wetlands. Town must spend the money to maintain them.
 - e. The council is willing to hear ideas around enforcing the codes or upgrading them.
4. Canal Maintenance (Chris)
 - a. Two meetings were held with Envirotech over the last few weeks.
 - b. Envirotech made two proposals – one for routine inspection and one for spring / fall maintenance focused on canal end. These proposals were shared with the committee. Chris shared two proposals with the committee.
 - c. The committee agreed that we didn't need Envirotech's services for inspections / observations.
 - d. After discussing these the committee agreed to have Chris contact Envirotech and request a new proposal for 'ad hoc' cleaning as required, instead of the two proposals we received. There would be no schedule fall / spring cleaning.
 - e. Dave will ask volunteers who collect water samples to note observations about trash / debris in the canals.
5. We were joined by Ed Whereat from the University of Delaware. Ed is part of the Delaware Sea Grant Advisory Service. He shared some history on the organization and some observations on the water quality of the inland bays.
 - a. The Service routinely analyses nutrient and bacteria levels from samples collected by community volunteers. Dissolved oxygen levels (%DO) has also been a focus. The State standard for DO is levels greater than 4mg/L.
 - b. The program has been in existence since 1991. Ed has been involved since 1998.
 - c. Ed was highly complementary of South Bethany's commitment to the water quality monitoring efforts.
 - d. We had a broad discussion on what we can do to improve our water quality.
 - i. Buffers between the homes and the canals can be helpful. With our small lots, this is difficult to accomplish.

- ii. Our large number of dead-end canals is also a challenge since there is little circulation and much of the storm water enters at the ends.
 - iii. Storm water from the York Mall area is also a challenge – at some point, we should consider addressing this issue.
 - iv. Mowing and yard waste is also a source of excess nutrients. Ed suggested we might want to add signage to inform tourist who might not be as well informed about the impact on water quality.
 - e. There was a discussion on algae and how to predict. Getting the algae out of the canals is a helpful way to reduce the nutrient levels in the canals.
 - i. Filamentous algae start off growing on the bottom and sides (bulkheads) of the canals. It then moves to the surface to increase sunlight exposure.
 - ii. We talked about ways to predict when it will become abundant to aid in future harvesting. One idea Ed had was to see if the ‘heating / cooling degree days would correspond to algae bloom.
6. Focus areas and discussions.
 - a. Code Review & Education / Communications (Bob)
 - i. Bob committed to meeting with the SBPOA about creating a ‘canal watch’ program for the community.
 - ii. Bob will try to find information on how other towns are working with lawn care companies to obey regulations.
 - b. Floating Wetlands (Gary)
 - i. Gary is meeting with members of town council to discuss the floating wetlands.
 - ii. We discussed ‘floating wetlands versions 1.0 and 2.0.’ The discussion is about what we learned from the original Center for Inland Bays experiment and is possible for the next generation floating wetlands.
 - c. Grant Funding (Chris)
 - i. No information on the grant request that the Town filed with the State in December.
 - d. Water Quality Monitoring & Analysis – Dave, Brian.
 - i. Brian has South Bethany meteorological data going back to 2008. If you’re interested, please contact him.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 11:56 am.